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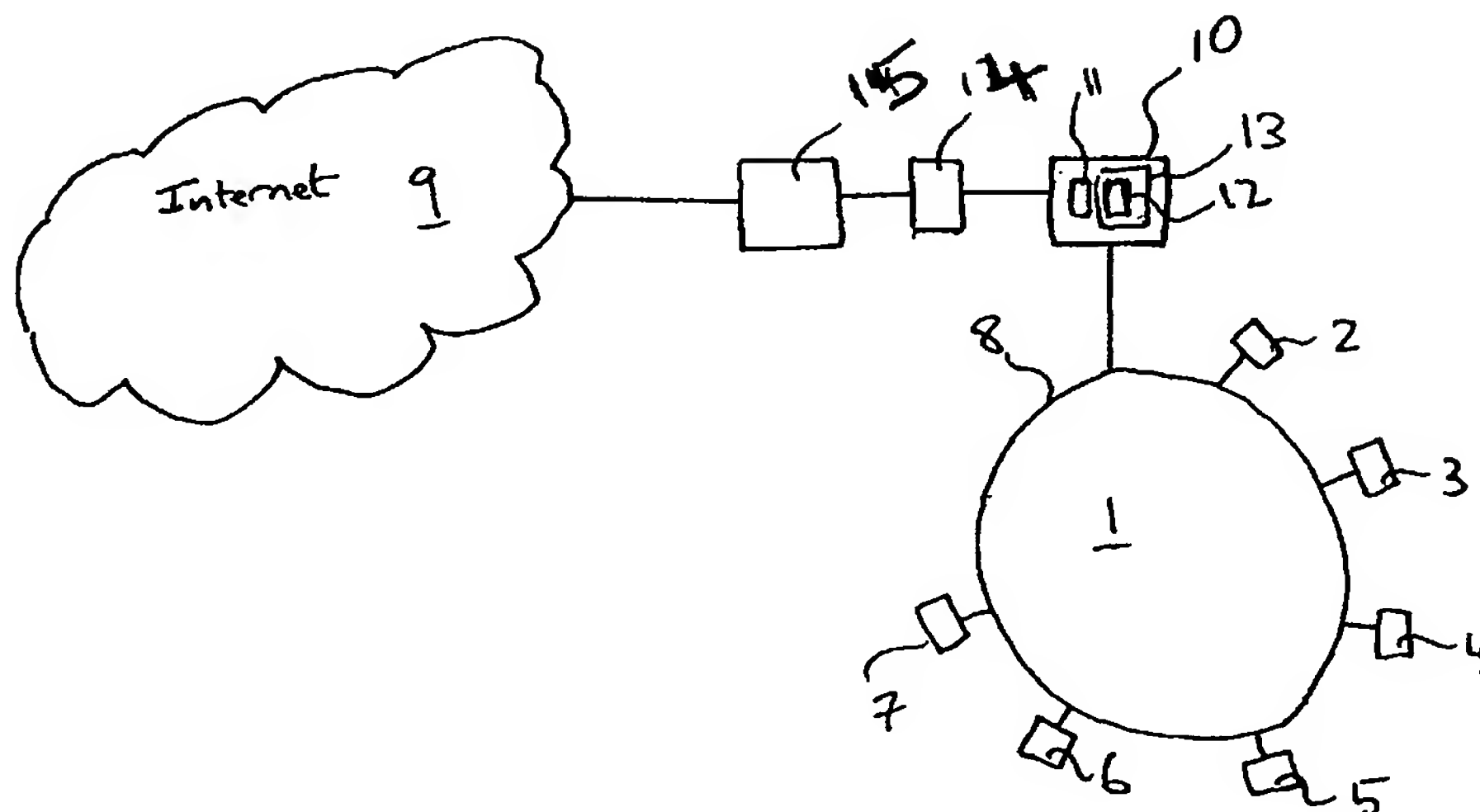
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(54) Title: COMMUNICATIONS APPARATUS AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: A communications apparatus includes a router (10), a network address translator (12) and a connection controller (11). The connection controller (11) governs the connection from LAN (1) to other networks such as the Internet. The LAN serves a number of terminals (2 to 7). in the event that the connection controller determines that the link to a particular LAN is not used it will enter a short term hold process. After a predetermined time has elapsed the connection is broken. However, the short term hold process can be circumvented by the network translator maintaining a record of the terminal use (or more particularly a port serving an application on the terminal). In the event that all the terminals are determined as not in use then a message is sent to the connection controller 11 indicating such and the connection is released. This avoids unnecessary connection cost and also enhances security of the LAN 1.

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